

Inspection of a good school: Bishopshalt School

Royal Lane, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3RF

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

Bishopshalt School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school, are safe and value their community. Leaders have recently heightened their expectations for pupils' achievement by introducing new curriculum plans. This is having a noticeable effect in key stage 3.

Each half-term, pupils study topics associated with one of the school's values, such as 'show kindness'. As they grow older, they explore these themes in more depth. Dropdown days help develop traits such as resilience and character.

A wide range of activities is available to pupils at lunchtime and after school. This offer matches pupils' interests and talents. These clubs are well attended by pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Movement in corridors is smooth, and lining up for lunch is orderly. The behaviour of pupils leads to a calm and purposeful environment in which there is no low-level disruption. Leaders have high expectations and deal well with any bullying incidents. A clear behaviour policy is in place. This is supported by most parents, although a small number think it can be too harsh.

Pupils feel that leaders value their views. For example, the 'young women' group put forward a proposal to modernise the uniform code. They wanted it to be more reflective of current workwear. Leaders accepted and implemented these changes.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Less experienced colleagues or non-subject specialists are well supported through the sharing of lesson plans and the joint creation of resources.

The programme of study covers all national curriculum subjects throughout Years 7 to 9. Schemes of work are currently in transition. New plans are being implemented that

include better opportunities for pupils to revisit and build on what they have learned before. These plans also make stronger connections between topics, so that pupils are better able to apply previous learning to new contexts. This is starting to have a positive impact on pupils in key stage 3. In languages, younger pupils remember important words and can use them well in new situations when talking about themselves and their families. In geography, curriculum leaders have taken careful account of pupils' prior learning in primary schools when planning their new curriculum for Years 7 to 9. This has improved pupils' learning and has also led to greater uptake at GCSE.

Key stage 4 pupils, who have not benefited as much from the revised curriculum, find recall of prior learning in languages harder. They rely too much on the support the teacher provides, and they struggle to produce their own work. Leaders understand that better performance in languages will help increase English Baccalaureate uptake. Leaders have made following through curriculum improvements into key stage 4 an important priority.

Another strategy introduced by leaders across the school is a focus on assessment as a means of checking pupils' recall and understanding. This includes questions at the start of lessons which require pupils to recall and deepen prior learning. This has been particularly powerful in geography, and in the sixth form where recall and discussion are helping to develop students' higher-level thinking skills.

Pupils with SEND are able to access the full curriculum and study all subjects. They are well supported by teaching assistants and the strategies in their 'learning passports'. This enables them to build up their knowledge well. Some pupils with SEND had previously been part of a 'nurture group' in Years 7 and 8, with a reduced curriculum. This did not include languages. Leaders have now discontinued this practice. The SEND department is supporting language teachers in ensuring these pupils are fully able to access learning in this area. In a small number of lessons, including in mathematics, work set for pupils with SEND could be more ambitious. This is a key area for further improvement.

Pupils behave well in lessons. This has a positive effect on their learning. Pupils are well guided in choosing their future careers. Speakers visit the school and tell them about various routes, including apprenticeships. Pupils with SEND are accompanied on visits to colleges. Older students organise talks and help younger pupils to access information. One example is a society which aims to encourage disadvantaged pupils to consider study in the medical sciences. This is part of the school's drive to raise pupils' aspirations.

The majority of staff feel well supported working at the school. Those at the start of their careers feel confident in approaching leaders with any concerns. Teachers appreciate leaders' recent change of policy regarding marking as it reduced workload. Many staff value the school's investment in their professional learning. However, a small number of teachers remain concerned about tight deadlines and a lack of clear expectations from senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Clear systems and procedures for safeguarding are in place. Leaders check these regularly. Systems for confidentially sharing knowledge about individual pupils are strong. This enables leaders to intervene promptly when necessary.

Pupils speak with honesty about local dangers. They trust the school and value the support it offers, including when they had experienced anxiety during the lockdown. Leaders have developed internal help, for example to deal with mental health issues. They work well with external agencies but were aware of the lack of resources during the pandemic. Leaders have offered training to staff on rebuilding pupils' emotional well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made a promising start on revising the curriculum across all subjects. This work is most effective in key stage 3. Older pupils have not benefited as much, and curriculum plans in key stage 4 are not as advanced. For this reason, transitional arrangements have been applied. Leaders should continue to revise curriculum plans into Years 10 and 11. They should also ensure that improvements in Years 7 to 9 result in greater participation in the English Baccalaureate.
- Key improvements have been made for pupils with SEND, who now have access to the full range of curriculum subjects. However, in some subjects, the work set for these pupils lacks ambition. This includes in mathematics. Leaders should ensure that the work set for pupils with SEND is as ambitious as that set for other pupils, in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bishopshalt School, to be good in February 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137633
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10204479
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1309
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	387
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Charles Coombs
Headteacher	Liam McGillicuddy
Website	www.bishopshalt.hillingdon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one external alternative provider, The Skills Hub, and an internal alternative provision, Almitas House.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about life at school and their work. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, lead practitioners,

teachers and governors, and had a telephone discussion with the principal of the alternative provision.

- Information regarding pupils' and students' attendance and behaviour was scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 102 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including comments received via the free-text facility. Inspectors considered the 34 responses to a questionnaire for staff. The questionnaire for pupils received no response.
- The inspection focused deeply on English, mathematics, science, languages and geography. Inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke with pupils, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teaching staff. Other subjects were considered as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and the support provided for pupils.

Inspection team

Luisa Bonelli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Heidi Swidenbank	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Howkins	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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